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CDA Weed Free Forage Program

The purpose of the certified weed free forage program is to inspect forage or mulch before it is harvested to verify that there are no propagative plant parts of noxious weeds present at the time of harvest. The use of certified weed free forage and mulch is intended to reduce the spread of noxious weeds and is required on public lands such as Forest Service and BLM ground along with national and state parks. Weed free mulch is also required for vegetation projects after road construction.

A producer wishing to have their forage or mulch certified can arrange for an inspection by contacting the Department of Agriculture at 303-239-4149. Some basic information is required in order for the Department to arrange for the inspection such as the number of acres to be inspected and the type of baler that will be used.



When an inspector arrives for the inspection he or she will have the special colored orange and blue twine or galvanized wire with them so it can be issued to the producer if the field or fields pass the inspection. The twine or wire only needs to be used on one side of the bale to visually identify the product as certified weed free. A field that has passed inspection must be cut within 10 days of the date of the inspection. If the field is not cut within the 10 days the department will arrange to have the field re-inspected to insure the forage or mulch will still qualify as weed free.

The certified weed free forage program is a "cash" funded program which means producers who participate in the program pay for the inspection service and the twine or wire to be used on the bales. The department charges \$ 20/hour for inspection time and driving time for inspectors and .50 cents/mile for inspectors' vehicles. The orange and blue twine or galvanized wire is charged at cost to the department along with the shipping cost to get the twine to the producer.

After a producer bales his or her certified weed free crop the department needs to be notified of the number of bales for each field and the amount of twine that was left over after the baling was complete. The department will arrange to have the extra twine picked up and will also send the producer the original inspection reports for each field. Transit certificates will also be provided so producers will have them available for their buyers.

The Department of Agriculture now provides a voluntary stack yard inspection for those producers who feel it may be a benefit in selling their weed free product. The stack yard inspection will be provided under the authority of the Colorado Pest Control Act and will be a separate inspection from the one conducted for the fields under the Certified Weed Free Forage Act.

The Department will provide an inspection report for the stack yard area for each cutting of hay or mulch if requested. The stack yard inspection will be similar to the field inspection in that we will inspect to the same list of weed under the certified Weed Free Forage Act. We will also walk the entire border of the stack yard and have a minimum of two entry points.

A stack yard inspection will cost \$20.00 per hour for inspection time and \$20.00 per hour for driving time if required. We will also charge 50 cents per mile to reimburse the inspector for their vehicle. This will be a separate bill from the weed free field inspection.

For more information please call 303-239-4149 or 303-239-4150.